

CGB

Connector

Volume 1, Issue 2

Fall 2002

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Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau



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Indian Telecommunications Initiatives

by K. Dane Snowden, Chief, CGB

This summer's inaugural issue of the *Connector* introduced the new Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau to the rest of the Commission and underscored our mission. In this and subsequent issues, we will highlight various initiatives - both policy and outreach - the bureau is undertaking to address consumer issues and to reach out to the community - especially beyond the Beltway. In addition, we provide some helpful and interesting telecommunications "tidbits" for consumers.

This edition of the *Connector* highlights the Indian Telecommunications Initiatives (ITI) (www.fcc.gov/indians), a program that encompasses all of our outreach efforts in Indian Country. ITI includes: (1) hosting educational workshops in Indian Country; (2) participating in conferences and events that address American Indian telecom issues; (3) meeting with tribal representatives; and (4) the distribution of educational materials through tribes and tribal organizations. Much of the bureau's work this year will target the establishment and development of our workshops, the first of which was held on September 19, 2002, in connection with the National Summit for Emerging Tribal Economies, in Phoenix, AZ.

ITI is the Commission's vehicle for conveying the necessary information to increase access to basic telecommunications services, thereby improving the quality of life in Native American communities. Indian Country represents a historically underserved community in the United States with respect to access to telecommunications services. We want to change that, pure and simple, and ITI will help provide the means.

As a first step, we want to promote telecommunications subscribership in Indian Country. To accomplish this, we are conducting targeted outreach about support available through Universal Service low-income programs particularly directed to those living on tribal lands. In our visits with tribal leaders and representatives, we discuss the FCC's efforts to promote our "Get Connected: Afford-A-Phone" program (www.fcc.gov/cgb/getconnected).

Just as important, we also provide information that will help increase telecommunications infrastructure deployment within American Indian tribal communities and Alaska Native villages. ITI workshops will address various aspects of telecommunications from wireless to wireline services, satellite communications, and the possibilities of forming tribally-owned telecommunications companies. All of our ITI activities recognize that different tribes are at different stages of economic development and levels of infrastructure.

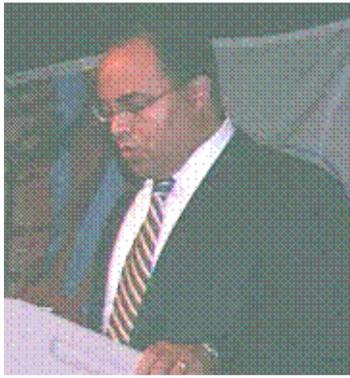
Accomplishing these goals will require collaboration. Essential to ITI is promoting a better understanding among the tribes, government agencies, and industry. These collaborative efforts will identify the unique challenges facing Indian Country and guide the partners in exploring basic telecommunications access solutions. The more interaction and dialogue there is among the tribes, the FCC, partner agencies, and industry representatives, the better the chances are for creating successful partnerships.

The FCC is committed to bringing to the residents of Indian Country basic telecommunications access that is functionally equivalent to services enjoyed in other parts of the country. We have witnessed the phenomenal impact telecommunication access has had on successful community development, from improved educational standing to increased employment opportunities to the assurance that access to emergency and long-distance medical services in Indian Country is available.

A dark blue oval containing white text that serves as a call to action. The text is centered within the oval and provides information on how to learn more about the Indian Telecom Initiatives.

For more information about
"Indian Telecom Initiatives",
visit our Web site at:
www.fcc.gov/indians

National Summit on Emerging Tribal Economics



FCC Chairman
Michael K. Powell

On September 19 the FCC participated in the National Summit on Emerging Tribal Economies, a national conference aimed at spurring business and job opportunities on American Indian and Alaska Native tribal lands, or “Indian Country.”

The National Summit was held September 16-19 in Phoenix, AZ, and was co-sponsored by American Indian tribes, corporate America, and many federal agencies, including the Federal Communications Commission and the host agency, the Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell delivered the keynote address on September 19, the day the National Summit devoted to federal agency seminars and workshops, and FCC Commissioner Michael Cops addressed seminar participants.

The National Summit’s goals are to create 100,000 jobs in Indian Country by 2008 and establish sustainable, market-driven tribal economies by 2020. The National Summit showcased more than 100 successful Indian businesses. National Summit objectives include creating a catalogue of tribal products and services, as well as initiating alliances among federal agencies, American Indian tribes, and corporate America that will result in more business opportunities and jobs on tribal lands. Conference attendees included tribal leaders from across the nation, federal government officials, nationally prominent corporations, and successful Native American businesses entrepreneurs.

A key component to economic development plans of tribes throughout the nation is the deployment of telecommunication infrastructure on their tribal lands, often where little or none currently exists.

The FCC’s program at the National Summit focused on strategies for successfully deploying telecommunications infrastructure to ensure sustained economic growth, public safety and welfare, educational opportunities, and successful government services. It highlighted telecommunication applications, choices, costs, regulatory implications, and consumer rights issues, as well as key federal government financial support programs. These issues were presented and discussed in a “nuts and bolts” fashion, through a series of panel presentations featuring tribal, industry and federal telecommunications experts.

CGB Launches New Indian Telecommunications Initiatives



Closing ceremony at the
National Summit

Building upon the past successes of FCC tribal outreach, in late April the FCC announced the Indian Telecommunications Initiatives (ITI) program, aimed at fostering an environment for developing partnerships among American Indian tribes, federal agencies, and the communications industry. ITI's goal is to increase telecommunications access in American Indian tribal and Alaska Native village communities.

Since 2000, one of the Commission's key outreach efforts in tribal lands nationwide, commonly called "Indian Country," is hosting educational conferences on increasing access to telecommunications services. These efforts included the highly successful Indian Telecom Training Initiative (ITTI) conferences of 2000 and 2001. The FCC is committed to maintaining the momentum started during these conferences and to advancing the goal of ITTI to improve access to basic telecom services for the residents of Indian Country.

With ITI, the FCC is expanding its focus from annual conference events to a series of interactive workshops among tribes, government agencies and the telecommunications industry to address telecom deployment and subscribership issues facing Indian Country.

Through ITI, the FCC hopes to promote increased access to telecom services, improved access to emergency and long-distance medical services, and enhanced education and employment opportunities for residents of tribal lands. ITI explores the potential for deploying various technologies, including wireless, wireline, satellite, and cable services to Indian Country.



Commissioner Michael J. Copps
with Patricia Chew of CGB
and Frank Stillwell of WTB
at the Exhibit Booth



CGB Bureau Chief,
K. Dane Snowden with
WTB's Frank Stillwell

In recent congressional testimony, CGB Bureau Chief K. Dane Snowden emphasized that ITI outreach efforts acknowledge "that different tribes are in different stages of economic development, particularly where telecommunications access is concerned." He added that the FCC "recognizes that different tribes face different impediments to telecommunications deployment," and the goals of ITI will be pursued "in a manner that may permit the Commission to target those communities where the need is most pronounced."



**CGB Bureau Chief
K. Dane Snowden**

In addition to targeted regional meetings with tribes, tribal representatives meet with FCC staff from time to time to obtain information about our various telecommunications programs.

CGB helps to coordinate these meetings between tribes and Commission staff to provide a forum for individual tribes to explore the various tools and resources available to them, consistent with the government-to-government relationship acknowledged in the Commission's Statement of Policy on Establishing a Government to Government Relationship with Indian Tribes.

As part of ITI outreach, on July 31, Snowden and CGB Associate Bureau Chief for Intergovernmental Affairs Kris Monteith visited the Chehalis Indian Community of the Chehalis Tribe in Washington state. After a town hall presentation by Snowden on ITI objectives and related FCC and federal government telecommunications deployment programs, they met with Chehalis tribal officials, representatives of regional tribal organizations, and Washington state officials. They discussed issues ranging from individual tribal consumer concerns to state-wide outreach on basic low income telephone service programs.

Another ITI event was the Commission's participation in September's National Summit on Emerging Tribal Economies, held from September 16 to 19, in Phoenix, AZ. At the Summit, the FCC provided a full day presentation on telecom issues in Indian Country which was highlighted by a keynote speech by Chairman Michael K. Powell.

For more information on this meeting, please see the related article in this issue of the *Connector* on page 4. For more information on ITI, please visit the FCC's ITI Web site at www.fcc.gov/indians.



**CGB's Janice Wise and
Patricia Chew at the
FCC's Exhibit Booth**

National Summit cont.

More than 1,000 people attended the National Summit and there were more than 300 exhibit hall booths. The conference was hosted by Secretary of Interior Gale Norton and chaired by Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Neal McCaleb, a member of the Chickasaw Nation. The day's events began with opening remarks by CGB Bureau Chief K. Dane Snowden. CGB Associate Bureau Chief Kris Monteith and Attorney Advisor and Liaison to Tribal Governments Geoffrey Blackwell moderated panels.

In addition to representatives of the CGB Office of the Bureau Chief and Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division, the FCC sent representatives from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau and Wireline Competition Bureau to inform conference attendees about universal service programs, spectrum auctions, tribal lands bidding credits, infrastructure siting concerns, and telecommunications technology deployment issues. Additionally, the CGB staffed a booth and provided information on a variety of issues related to telecom infrastructure deployment in Indian Country.

For more information about the National Summit, visit www.lakotamal.com/nationalsummit/

Geoff Blackwell is an Attorney Advisor in CGB and Liaison to Tribal Governments. Geoff provides counsel to the Consumer Affairs and Outreach Division



and works on outreach to American Indian and Alaska Native communities on telecommunications deployment issues and all aspects of the FCC.

Before coming to the FCC, Geoff worked in the litigation department of Hale and Dorr, LLP, of Boston, MA, while his wife, Beth, completed her doctoral degree in Biostatistics at the Harvard School of Public Health. Earlier, Geoff was in private practice assisting tribes in developing their legal codes and governmental systems.

Born in Fort Defiance, AZ, and raised in New Mexico and Oklahoma, he graduated with an A.B. in Government from Dartmouth College in 1991, and a J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1994.

Geoff comes from a family with a commitment to public service. Both his parents have long histories of being active in Indian Affairs.

Geoff is an enrolled member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma, and is also of Omaha, Choctaw, and Chickasaw descent. Geoff, Beth and their newborn daughter, Megan Elizabeth, live in Rockville, MD.



I Get By with a Little Help From... Assistive Technologies

By Greg Hlibok, Attorney Advisor, CGB

Upon entering my office on the first day at the FCC, I noticed that the computer was not facing the door. I instinctively moved the computer to the right spot so that the door is visible when I use the computer. Because I am deaf, I am quite observant of my surroundings.

My day is not very different from a typical FCC employee's day – just a few simple modifications. Each morning the “blinking sun” awakens me as the lamp that is plugged into the alarm clock blinks at the appropriate time. I say “good morning” in sign language to my wife and son and watch the weather report on captioned TV. Then, while I am on the road to the train station, I check my text pager for messages.

When I get to work, I check my e-mails and schedule planner and look for messages on my TTY answering machine. Next, I discuss with Traci Randolph, my sign language interpreter, the plans for the day to see where her services may be required for any meetings.

Throughout the day I rely heavily on e-mails for correspondence. Sometimes I switch to the relay service Web site to make Internet-based relay calls.

Assistive technologies definitely make my days productive and allow me to participate fully both on and off the job.

Greg Hlibok has been an attorney advisor in CGB's Disability Rights Office since June 2001. He concentrates mainly on Telecommunications Relay Service issues.

Greg is a native of Queens, NY. He attended Gallaudet University and Hofstra University Law School and is a member of the New York state bar. Prior to joining the Commission, Greg had been an attorney in private practice and a financial advisor at Merrill Lynch.

In 1988, while at Gallaudet, he was active in the Deaf President Now movement whose goal was not only to install a deaf president at the school, but also to create greater opportunities for deaf people. The movement led to the appointment of Gallaudet University's first deaf president, I. King Jordan. As a result of this success, Greg was selected as Peter Jennings's ABC Person of the Week.

In his spare time Greg enjoys soccer and volunteers with deaf organizations. He has formed an American Sign Language book and video section at his public library and participates in the adopt-a-road project.

He is married to Charmaine and has a two-year-old son, Ranier. They are expecting an addition to the family in November.



Greg Hlibok

CGB is continually working with groups in Washington, DC, and throughout the country and the world to promote its programs to benefit consumers and learn about consumers' needs and concerns. Here are a few of the recent efforts.

Groups Meet to Discuss Assistive Technology

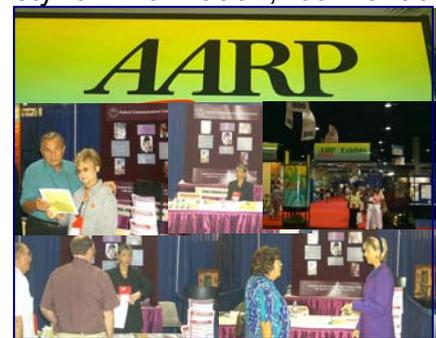
In June Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy met with representatives from the Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association (CTIA) and members of the disability community. The two groups shared information on the importance of wireless communications to persons with disabilities, and the need for open dialogue between the wireless industry and the disability community. The session provided an opportunity for consumers, research and academia, and industry representatives to exchange ideas with each other on the impact wireless technologies have on persons with disabilities. As a result of this meeting, the groups now have a better understanding of the needs of the disability community, the challenges facing industry to meet those needs, and the benefits to everyone in expanding technological accessibility.

AARP Annual Convention in San Diego

As part of its ongoing effort to educate consumers about issues affecting their every day lives, the Commission participated in the AARP's September 12-14, 2002, annual convention in San Diego, CA. AARP, the nation's largest association, is a nonprofit membership organization for people over 50.

Over 10,000 seniors attended the event, many of whom stopped by the FCC's booth where staffers Roger Goldblatt and Janice Wise answered questions and distributed thousands of brochures, fact sheets and alerts. Premiering at the convention was the FCC's "Internet Café." Using the slogan "Serving Up to Those Hungry for Answers and Thirsty for Information," convention participants hooked up to a live Internet chat with Washington and Gettysburg staff. Serving up the answers for frequently asked questions ranging from TCPA, phone bill charges and cell phone "dead spots" were Sharon Jenkins, Gwen Upchurch and Mary Shaak.

"The often-heard 'thanks for being here; it's nice to see your agency cares about us,' was very satisfying," said Roger and Janice. "The FCC's presence in San Diego couldn't have been more appreciated."



FCC Exhibit at the 2002
AARP Annual Convention

Brown Bag Lunch with Commissioner Abernathy

In August Commissioner Abernathy hosted a brown-bag lunch with members of the blind and low-vision community. The group discussed the FCC's role in accessibility issues such as video description television programming, broadband accessibility, low-power FM radio, and industry compliance with FCC regulations. The group also discussed Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act which address accessibility to technology and the denial of benefits to disabled persons, and Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act which requires manufacturers and service providers to make their equipment and services accessible to individuals with disabilities where readily achievable.

Eliminating Interference

Interference to home electronic equipment is a frustrating problem. Interference is any unwanted radio frequency signal that prevents you from watching television, listening to your stereo, or talking on the telephone. Interference may prevent reception altogether, may cause only a temporary loss of a signal, or may affect the quality of the sound or picture produced by your equipment. Here are some tips you can try to eliminate the problem yourself.

Check your equipment:

Many interference problems are the direct result of the design of your home electronics equipment. You should contact your equipment manufacturer or the dealer from whom you purchased the equipment for assistance.

Simplify the problem:

Start by disconnecting all equipment from the piece of equipment you are trying to fix. Then, reconnect each of these additional devices individually to determine which device may be reacting to an external source and causing the interference.

Check your connections:

Make sure all cables are properly fastened and in good condition. If you have cable television service, contact your cable company for assistance.

Check your amplifier:

Temporarily disconnect the amplifier and bypass it. By doing this, you allow the signal from the antenna to go directly to the TV or radio receiver. If the interference disappears, then the amplifier is causing the problem.

Check your antenna system:

Even though your antenna does not have moving parts, the wire and the antenna physically deteriorate due to the affects of time and weather.

If after following these steps your system continues to react to the interference, contact your equipment manufacturer. The manufacturer or your telephone or home electronics equipment is the best resource to help you eliminate interference. For more information about "Eliminating Interference", visit our Web site at www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/interference.

The FCC Military Campaign

Calling Home

The FCC has introduced a new campaign, "Calling Home," for military service members, Department of Defense civilians, their friends and families.

Difficulty in accessing telecommunications services or just the high cost of calling can keep men and women serving away from home from keeping in touch with their friends and family.

The "Calling Home" program was launched in May 2002, during Armed Forces Appreciation Month. "Armed Forces Appreciation Month is an especially appropriate time for us to be thinking about the sacrifices made by members of the Services and Defense Department civilians," said K. Dane Snowden, Chief, FCC Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau. "It's also a perfect time to think about ways we can make their lives a little easier," he said.

Check out our consumer brochure *"Calling Home: What You should Know"* for important information and great tips on staying in touch. The brochure is available at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/military/militarycallhome.html>



Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau staffer Dan Rumelt (in blue shirt) takes a break from his vacation to show members of the 352nd Information Operations Squadron at Hickham Air Force Base in Hawaii how to save money

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